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More Than Likely

I was sent here for this purpose,
 to discuss the trouble
 with water colors and loss, the two cups
 on the table,
 a profound sense of
 responsibility
 where someone else built the house, while
 I was going out against a dying fall,
 setting out for a place
 I did not know,
 saying
 'an ungrateful love were as nothing.'
 Although in a reduced state,
 when I return, and I always return,
 there are two cups
 on the table, the coincidence of two persons
 who are what we have left,
 the faith we have
 that the other will be there. The note
 on the table, saying
 don't turn away from me.

ron androla
for rene

I don't know where or how to begin, he admits,
 face low, tongue like the flip of a yo-yo anchor
 from the sky. I don't believe I have anything
 to say, he confesses, that is unlike anything
 ever sd — I'm a limited brain creature,

dumb dot of a man, with all the force
 & mystery of the cosmos around a
 chip of human mind; he mopes. I can't
 burst my angels under the press of oxygen,
 he ascertains. I feel myself talking

behind my eyes, nasal cave echoes,
 & I sound like a cow with a chopped up moo.
 moo moo to you, he laughs.
 apples are full of flu.
 ed sullivan is god's right

hand
 man
 of
 a
 dog, & the sun sprays

thru us all
 thru the very planet
 paint treetops
 eat
 stone

be
 blue glue
 stop
 thickening
 existence

he sits
 blank on a blank chair
 he
 smells
 apples

Debutante

Helm Filipowitsch

From the motel room, we walk derelict road
 to the sand dune. Here, chain-link fence
 sags in its embrace of the abandoned theme park ride.
 In the lees of April, the wind skips off
 the lake; a cold slap against bare skin.
 You hesitate, back away. I continue across
 flattened fence, grass tufts, winter bilge from
 the adjacent subdivision. Sand lines, like arteries,
 crisscross to the frantic waves. South of me, a tree
 leans over the ragged beach. I raise my camera,
 adjust to sepia, boost contrast—focus.
 Six times, the waves are trapped in amber.
 I struggle up the ridge, my back now to the wind, and stalk
 your retreating steps. At the contorted crab-apple
 trees, we're again walking side by side.
 'How long have we been walking now,' you ask.
 I look at my wristwatch, still speckled with living-room
 taupe. 'Fifty minutes.' The rattling in your breathing
 is more pronounced. 'No...no, that's not an hour,
 that's not enough,' and I agree—less than the goal
 wouldn't be very positive at all. We veer toward
 the subdivision. Your chemo begins on Monday
 and the magnolias are ready to bloom.

Tom Blessing

she falls into the moon

late night at the kitchen table
talking politics and poetry
half a lime sits on the blue plate
he squeezes the other half into
his beer and follows it with
a drop or two of tabasco
she watches her father's hands
worn by years of work
repairing cars at his shop
he first read bukowski
after he saw some movie
he'd always thought poetry
was what you read in school
nothing to do with your life
but buk opened a window
and he climbed through
mom never understood
what he found in the poems
never knew that what he'd found
justified his life, said okay
you're doing fine, yeah just fine
they empty their glasses
he closes his eyes and recites a poem
it isn't one of buk's
there are others he has read
androla, chandler, monroe
splake, moore, moffeit,
townsend, lifshin, hartenbach
a litany of names she'd never heard
in her classes at university
he places a book in front of her
a long dead chinese poet
a divine drunk like bukowski
she opens to a well thumbed page
as she reads she falls into the moon

Helm Filipowitsch

In the Trailer Park, it's Eight AM

your words
flattened by rain
against open window
July is hollow filled
with silent angry pools

morning falls coffee and rye
over toast over jam
over sight across news from
a thousand places
are no longer connected

chair is here cane there
and doorway misplaced
with my body's dictionary
we no longer communicate

I'm a pile of words
perhaps in the corner
with the wash unsorted
collection of things
that have happened
still emitting life's sour odour

Bird Flying

Believe in the world of air. Set sail
on this ocean propelled by iambic wind.
Marvel at tree islands, the isthmus
of telephone pole shot straight through
slow whorls of adiabatic tides. Gather
the courage to bend a wing into
a dive that captures the marvel of death
escaped. Control the contours of each
moment portaging between. Acquire
the courage to fold your feathers
into the haiku which brings you again
to the cold and other-worldly touch of earth.

I want to make an arrangement
I want to meet you
I want to feel awkward
I want to talk nervously
about unimportant things

I want to walk east
maybe south for awhile
find a place new to both of us
I want to do something dumb
and let you see it
and say embarrassing things
so that you can hear them

I want to watch you drink wine
and look at your mouth
and listen to your voice
and see your hair
and its shadow on your neck

I want to watch your eyes
as your lips move
I want to make an arrangement
I want to walk north for awhile
or wherever you walk
and then back to my house

I want to thank you
And I want you to insist
on tucking me in
and when I resist
I want you to threaten
that you'll get a writ
of habeas corpus

I want to laugh and concede
to watch a movie at least
and while it's flashing
its light around the bedroom

I want to kiss you
and hear your voice of caution
and kiss you again
and put my left hand on your right hip
and with my right hand
find your bra clasp

and then see your tattoos

How To Get Published

Lie still, spread your verbs
to examination.

Don't quiver in the assault
of attacking adverbs.

Be benign to the voices which will never understand
beyond the field of their own vision.

Realize there is not one noun
which will spell 'world'.

Adjectives are perception
and perception is the tide time deposits

on the beaches of experience,
the rocks beyond which we float.

Be accelerate to floatation devices
delivering you to the beach.

Begin to crawl and never stop.

Zachary Blessing

classical on the radio
and i think back to the roads
driving with my father
song sounds like little feet
swimming through the trills
and running through the leaves the grass and the
arpeggios
facing forte-sized spiders
and running back to the holes
in time for the coda
little musical lives
each one a note
"listen! instrumental ants!"
my dad smiles and we
start to tell the story

Walter Bjorkman

A Place in Time

There was a place where I read of myself only
Colored in grays and blues
With a chandelier dimly casting its shadows

The corner ceiling was high and vaulted
She slept covered in white across the way
The chill of morning locking her wiry frame

I wrote, disjointedly, detached and irregular
"Why does she hold resentments like I hold this book?"
Her hair never shows signs of patience

The part I played was just a part
Of my long-held belief in the other's belief,
Now she holds none in me

She'll want that last cigarette when she awakens,
I thought as I lit it up
This is my place to think of myself only

Saturday morning we stopped at a kiosk
Bought an ancient brass candle-snuffer
Not for its purpose, but for its looks

I'll leave now – nothing to stay for
This corner is too angled for me
This chair embraces no more

Cold morning, lost words
Reading A Brief History of Time
On the long train ride away

There was a place I read of myself only

Andrew Lundwall

a sadeyed lie

of spring things of snakecharmed sighs
a ship trapped in bottle swirling ash
i'll write you

of the whip and its longevity
its horizon
of loneliness and speakeasies

you're a sadeyed lie

kept here kept dying kept dusting eternally
recurring in blue smoke real ether slowlike
under pleasant roofs of nowheres spheres
of imagine snow of huge stained glass factory windows
of nightowls howling fakity in embrace moaning one true moon

Amy King

A Rough Guide To Mistakes

It's hard to hold it without handing it back;
I give myself a uniform and go out in it,
an anchored sense of skin in sheer shrink-wrap
that sticks close to my cello back.
Her statuesque Madonna smokes Gauloises
on a battled street corner, delights in
a tincture of love's kicking shadows,
shapes beholden to tourniquets
of pain applied in places like Marrakech. They
resemble that cut you got in Montana
engrossed in the blame you ate
for a lie never to exit your mouth.
A carbonation hit
right in the backs of my eyes that time
overstuffed teeth and fingers curled
at the palm of your throat. The beer steins
went thick bottomed up all around.
I still smell like cake and ale, and do you think
you could say, "It was the third man who
entered and sank sixty fathoms down
dark in this town's centered sense of town."
Only the museum artist, once we've drowned, will
recount the quarrels thrown at this missing wall.

One Bright Thing

We tiny parasites of the relatively unseen feel
This looks like yesterday and not the day
I challenged it to be. Once a week it hits me
that some laws are better left undecided,
or was it "lawns" I said instead? My neighbor,
let's call him "Joe," has broken
every ethical code known to man. Of course no
one can find the sailor stuffed in a trunk or child
he bit or pair of stitched-up over-fed legs to prove
our indiscretions. He parks his one bright thing
in my driveway nightly,
comes and goes as he fondles the tints of sleep,
lighting a long cigarette from the bottom of a ditch,
most likely in a manner similar
to that of the women who danced round tops
at the Folies Bergere. They played to
dragged-out versions of the French Can-Can.
After an applied madness and harder mattress,
I leave my secretest of places,
The Smoking Room becomes some same
scene leatherfying hands can safely regret,
without all the love-laden wringing. And if
you follow these two threads
with hands through a trail of smoke,
you'll find at the end pictures of you
and pictures of me in the pockets of jeans can-
not charm ourselves into shelter or vanilla belief.

Free Jizz

Ebullient, habitual jailbirds
Can't help but pump, even
In icy solitary confinement.

To counter, the longest mensch
Must mesh as often as possible
With the lankiest women—Plato.

Thwarted by ribbed rubber,
Unfortunately, some mourn,
Masters of Arts and Science,
While genius gargoyles spout.

It's thundered that men and women of full age, without
Any hinderance due to passport, skin tone or religion,
Whether a punk, a poet, a lunatic or a preacher,
Have the right to marry and to found a family.

At the Goa rave, ballhogs, lollipops and witches
Circulating among doofs, tugboats and whales,
Multiply with calculators between their thighs.

The Persistence of Animism

Born-again death row inmate confides to his rectangle
Of cracked concrete. A groom chit chats with his mare,
Daring it to lick his soiled face. Cruising to rock towards
Another crunchy pileup, modern man has prolonged sex
With his cozy, steely host, baptizes it with a wet phrase.

so much leaving

picture me whisper losted in a vault tossed
a hand passes over feeding the fabric
of sometime embraces

a land past presently stony unknown
so much leaving going echoey a twinkly never
drowning in starstudded blood whiskey a canceled magic
x-eyed to turn a never return with clamphands swallowing follow

About the poems by Benjamin Buchholz

Reunion with my lover, my wife, mother of my children, after 18 months of war and preparation for war, after two years before that of separation, the standard sort of doghouse husband separation: we were young, we're not so young anymore, not so innocent, war and life conspire against innocence in all its forms, but still the prospect of being together, reunited, arouses fantasy, longing, memories of the good and bad times and a certain sense of apprehension: will this union work? We believe. We've sworn to try, that's all anyone can do. These two poems are part of a collaborative series. Angie sends me questions. I answer them with poetry. Maybe it helps us address those real-life concerns, maybe it vents the fantasy so we can live and be more real when the time comes for togetherness. Either way, it's fun, this process of reunion.

Did you bring my black shoes?

I hooked up the wood trailer, swept it clean, deer tracks in the lawn at dusk when the dews began to fall, see them sunshine slanting through the stride, black rings of absence, the leaping, dust and woodchip and bark, a faded bottle of Mountain Dew bright on the underside where the sun didn't strike it, swept it clean, tested the engine, changed the oil, played a cassette of Johnny Cash I found in the glove compartment, not so much for hauling the shoes, you were vague my love, the black shoes, which though?, there are iterations of them, not so much for the shoes but for dad, because he'd like us to arrive clean, with the wood truck in state, and whatever shoes, really, it's okay I'll tell you, it's okay, this thick grass with the deer tracks marks substance, dissolution, sunset, it's okay.

Do you think the kids are sleeping?

No, I think the kids are in a weather test balloon, silvery, up in the sky, with their bedsheets pulled to their chins, shivering but looking down at the world in awe, the green mosaic, the drifting whiteout of cumulus, barn roofs, silos, the pasture with the fort hidden in the hill of rocks,

I think the kids are sneaking out ten years from now, have a glass of wine with me, we'll listen to them, sneaking out, meeting their friends in the dark for the long walk, spy-like, slinking from hedgerow to hedgerow across town, their girlfriends have gathered, one of them babysitting, they'll time themselves kissing, hold shakingly the shoulder, stiffen, feel that weird edge of the plain white bra cut into the arch of the girl's back, what will they do with it?,

come, sip, it's got a good bouquet, they're running through the rainstorm, it's been tingling in them, welling up, they'll lay on their backs in the darkness staring at the dotted ceiling, connecting the fibers of tree branch and cloud, crossed between the moon and them, wondering, what do they do downstairs?, mom and dad, what do they do?, is it urgent, seminal, are they sneaking into each other's arms like the thieves for whom they've always hungered?

Lorna Dee Cervantes

He Was Far More Complicated Than That

He was the hugest heart in a helmet,
grinning into his future, a purple sunset
over Michigan's former majesty – a full boy,
a hunter and a camper - good thoughts all around.

On his father's Harley, with a grandfather's
Bible tucked in his war shirt, heaven on his sleeve,
a sleek passage into duty – choice was an inheritance
in the hours of ironing and polishing the buttons.

His poetry on the lips of the survivors,
lines about sacrifice and the selfless, believing
conditions were improving – an expedition
into history. He was indestructible.

A winning force, a signature on the passing
of time, a camouflage and ramrod
boy, a fighter – he preferred peace,
a lakefront home, the walls of collages

introducing the chapters: posing Dragons,
wrestling circles, a wedding day, the sun busting
through the senseless trees – something like an animal
huddled beyond the field - a trained sniper.

*"This is who I am." Love. A misfire.
"A Marine to the very end." Endlessly.*

OCHO

Lyle Daggett

graves registration

like a wind of wolves, like a lover,
i have come answering your call.
on the high galleon of empire, chasing
gray phantoms, we sail out of new bedford.
behold, i am the heart of iron. hear me,
i am the voice that shatters dreams.
a house of fresh paint, a rosebush,
a small clock on the wall, a high school
yearbook photograph. the toys
of the dead, the salt of fossils.
eyes that once could see into the heart
grow distant and clouded with milk.
the monster of meat and grease slugged up
on the deck, opened to the air by long knives:
deliverance of the bearers of light: blood for oil.
the sea is a drunken chaplain tottering toward nightfall.
tripoli, barbary, the far bermudas,
tilting toward waves and ice, we move with a purpose.
thunder offshore, racket of gunfire, thump of drums.
you who knew us, remember our works
and the fires that burn here.
for a monument leave a fallen wall.
you will have salt on the table, and
the lure of the tropics, low deductibles,
and in general a promising growth rate for investments.

Not Yet Ron Androla

lebanon. watch news,
the cnn trance. ann
hates it all. she quotes
nimmo. i can't help
watching fox news just
to see, to hear.
ann leaves the room.
lebanon. prime
minister declares
his country a disaster
zone. i don't
want to understand
it, it's
tv.

Suddenly happy palaces by the sea,
easy lip of the lake unfurls
if I can leave my cup
of heroics at the margins,
we routine goats of butting heads
are the phone calls Yeats
is imagined to have had

No Atlantis appears now nor
shared mind's eye, no capsule to deliberate
governments against the backdrop
of waves to come, black & white movies

I read your hand and love you without
loving you and shame could be so small
as the white in this white background

People pay technology
listens for a trust
in the knob, the buttoned
you sounds retrograde,
retroactive, a respect issue
at the camp cradled in
the circular arm of childhood

What does an immigrant mourn?
A missing child isn't the same
as a child wandering
no way we go
with crossing fingers & legs

I am not an African under the knife,
a peasant by the shores digging clams,
my relative curing grain in a still
on the red banks of Georgia.
I am without ailment,
the throb and bone to lay hands on

Speech holds saliva hostage
without quite getting the wine
down the throat, a lack of pre-vinegar
tasting the carnation of sabotage
startled, begs off entrance
from a paper thin wife cut-out

To cook and fuck and clean the sofa
cushions, photos and bar stools
and dark from light brews
generosity dormant in the details

An admission from the room's
center includes removing a heart
from its clamps, wrestling
the sucking tug of muscle from muscle,
a terminal breath at maybe
eight p.m., more grief in potential,
a hanging sled
on the wall in summertime.

This layer is two thousand six,
a man strolls, brandished guitar plus
the sound of dreams for rent,
floral peppers across the table
spread somewhere else, a penny falls
on a numbered street marking
opposites and appetites, no
escape from Cinderella balls,
men who celebrate action
with their cocks, women with
their cocks, hope in the impregnable
advances on loneliness,
filters through such walking husks—

This is not an automatic door,
freeze frame early enough
to besmirch an after-dinner crowd
opportunity to make him
look like a circus misfit
in the camera's clean unpressed suit
played to an accidental melody,
a monk of undiscovered frequency,
an abuse of youth without a clue
in half moon boots on leather
couch theory, though
a sense of the finger taps
some major life
only the rest in us can suffer
the worst, which is marrow
within tubular bones hidden
hollow by a ring on the length
of prance and suspense,
a hope to be death's beneficiary,
a public promise for a little bit

OCHO

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